The AMERICAN SPECTATOR

A LITERARY NEWSPAPER

Vol. I. No. 6. APRIL, 1933 All Rag Paper Edition—50 Cents

The AMERICAN SPECTATOR

A LITERARY NEWSPAPER

EDITED BY

GEORGE JEAN NATHAN
ERNEST BOYD
THEODORE DREISER
JAMES BRANCH CABELL
EUGENE O'NEILL

Published by THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR, INC.
RICHARD R. SMITH, *President*
12 East 41st Street, New York City

The American Spectator is published on the third Thursday of each month and is circulated simultaneously in England, France, Germany, Austria and Italy. Unsolicited manuscripts, save those accompanied by fully stamped, self-addressed envelopes, will not be returned. All such manuscripts must be addressed to the Editors, not to individual editors. The entire contents of this publication are protected by copyrights and must not be reprinted in whole or in condensed form without special permission. The price of single copies is 10 cents; annual subscriptions $1.25; Canadian subscriptions $1.75. All rag paper edition of second and succeeding issues, 50 cents, or by subscription direct to publisher, $5.00 a year. Editorial and publishing offices, 12 East 41st Street, New York City. Printed in the United States of America. Copyright 1933 by The American Spectator, Inc., Richard R. Smith, President. Entered as second class matter October 28, 1932, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

EDITORIAL

WHAT is your constructive program? What do you propose to do? What do you suggest? You cannot merely adopt a negative attitude. On every hand one hears this criticism—if it can be dignified by such a word—whenever human problems are discussed, and never are these plaintive remarks more frequent than in times of change and stress, like the present. To produce a program, a solution, a panacea, in such times is obviously the equivalent of whistling in the dark. When people are bewildered, apprehensive, or down-right frightened, they call for reassuring platitudes, for diverting novelties, for anything that will distract their minds from present fears. If Mother will only tell a bed-time story, Little Fern will be a good girl and go to sleep.

Some children are permitted by their indulgent parents to demand the bed-time story, to be shown the inside of Papa's watch, to demand some childish satisfaction or entertainment, as a condition of falling to sleep and forgetting the bogey-man—of accepting the plain facts of life, in brief. As parents know only too well, the longer Junior is encouraged in his whims, the more he becomes accustomed to being spoiled with pretty fairy tales and picture books, the harder it is for him to resign himself to the fact that the best thing for him to do is to say his prayers—or pretend to do so—and go to sleep without crying for the moon.

Nowadays our grown-up children seem to be reverting to their nonage, in the sense that, in the precise degree of their previous inexperience, or to the extent of their previous self-indulgence in unreality, they clamor for help, for consolation, for the fragile toy balloons of various 'isms, 'ologies and 'ocracies. Those who fail to come forward with all the old nostrums and the new are treated with the same resentment as Nurse used to be, when she finally tucked in the sheets, turned off the light, and said: "Now, that will do"; having exhausted all her feeble variations on Grimm and Hans Andersen. Give me a theory, or give me death, is apparently the motto of many of our stampeded fellow-citizens and their foreign congeners. There must be a Santa Claus, whether Marxian, Technocratic, Fascist, Liberal, Free Trader, Fabian, or Christian Scientist, Catholic, Classicist, Royalist or Seventh Day Adventist.

Here, in effect, is the curious feature of this plaintive cry for nostrums, for economic, political and sociological paregoric: the more antiquated and inappropriate to modern life the dogma, the louder the neophytes shout that they have found the solution to all problems. When Bernard Shaw was a wild youth, it was inevitable that all young enterprising heretics should read "Das Kapital." Today this work, whose author died when the modern age was not yet in its scientific infancy, is regarded by sophomores as a revelation which those of us who read it thirty years ago are supposed to receive in swooning wonder. Even the venerable Mr. Shaw himself, on visiting Russia, decided to forget that one of the most brilliant efforts of his early years in London was his learning the elementary principles of economics from Jevons' refutation of the Marxian theory of Value. People who remember the time when Marx was seriously discussed, instead of being canonized or hysterically execrated, may be pardoned for not immediately bowing down to the glorifiers of the American tractor.

In the nursery, it is true, the first telling of the story of Little Red Riding Hood came as a surprise to Little Fern, and Junior was vastly impressed by Jack the Giant Killer. As they grew up both children may have had the renewed thrill of reading these masterpieces for themselves, but there came a point when, even when eked out with Perrault, Grimm and Andersen, they failed to satisfy. Similarly, an educated reader of the serious periodicals of Europe and America can hardly have arrived at the age of forty without having been invited to consider every conceivable solution for the problems of this wicked world. The history of mankind is the ceaseless repetition of various fairy-wand movements, none of which has ever achieved the end in view.

FREUDIANISM BEFORE FREUD

by PRESERVED SMITH

TO all appearances psychoanalysis has deeply colored much of contemporary literature. Many biographers apply it as a key to unlocking the soul; novels without end deal with complexes, sublimation, the ego and the id, and various forms of perversion and neurosis; plays like O'Neill's "Mourning Becomes Electra," d'Annunzio's "Città Morta," and Howard's "The Silver Cord" exploit the incest motif; histories of literature, especially Lewisohn's "Expression in America," explain the whole intellectual life of a nation in Freudian terms. Nevertheless, one may well pause to ask whether Freud did more than rationalize and justify a *posteriori* knowledge and insight that had hitherto been intuitive and half-conscious in the minds of great literary artists. O'Neill has recently denied any direct debt to Freud in the following striking words, contained in a letter to Miss Martha C. Sparrow, dated October 13, 1929, and published in the *Saturday Review of Literature* for May 28, 1932:

> There is no conscious use of psychoanalytical material in any of my plays. All of them could easily have been written by a dramatist who had never heard the Freudian theory and was simply guided by an intuitive psychological insight into human beings and their life impulsions that is as old as the Greek drama.

The possibility of unconscious influence remains, both in the case of O'Neill and in that of any writer of the last half century. It is uniformly excluded, however, for any writer before Freud. It is therefore extremely interesting to observe that thoroughly Freudian principles can be found in great poets and novelists of the early nineteenth century.

Incest has been much exploited by writers from the time of the Greeks until now because the horror it inspires adds a powerful ingredient to tragedy. It interested the Greeks enormously, the Romans much less, and the medievals hardly at all—so little, in fact, that the word "incest" in medieval Latin almost always means merely the violation of sacerdotal chastity. The subsidence of religious and resurgence of secular ethics in the Renaissance led to a revival of interest in the sexual union of close blood-relations. Lucretia Borgia, Margaret of Navarre, Anne Boleyn, and many other prominent figures were then accused of the crime by contemporary gossip or by the law. It was much exploited in literature, notably in the Elizabethan drama. It is introduced in some eighteenth century novels, notably in Defoe's "Moll Flanders" and in Fielding's "Tom Jones." The Romantic poets, especially Alfieri, Byron and Shelley, used it repeatedly as a theme. Byron disguised under fictitious names his own amour with his half-sister, in "Manfred" and in "Cain." Though the plot of "Manfred" somewhat resembles that of "Faust," its real theme is remorse for the inexpiable crime of incest. The name Astarte, as the criminally loved sister, a name selected by Lord Lovelace as the title of his exposure of his grandfather's guilty passion, was doubtless borrowed by Byron from the "Histoire d'Aphéridon et d'Astarté" found in the sixty-seventh of Montesquieu's "Lettres Persanes."

Shelley was even more partial to the theme than was Byron, introducing it into "The Cenci" and into "Rosalind and Helen," and wishing to introduce it into "The Revolt of Islam," though dissuaded by the earnest entreaties of his publisher. Chateaubriand's René is the object of a criminal passion of his sister. In almost all these places, horror of the sin is expressed; in a few a milder judgment is rendered. It remained for the philosopher and theologian Schleiermacher to declare that the union of brother and sister is less unnatural and wrong than life-long marriage.

The first really psychoanalytic treatment of the subject that I have found occurs in Goethe. His Mignon, though the offspring of an incestuous union, is drawn with sympathy. But what is really new and startling is his discovery that the sexual perversions that constitute crimes when carried to their actual realization constitute, in their incipient and unconscious stages, normal parts of healthy and blameless development. They are like the gills and other vestiges of animal ancestry found in every embryo, but ordinarily sloughed off, surviving only in the case of monsters. Goethe speaks thus comprehendingly in his "Aus Meinem Leben," Book IV, of child life:

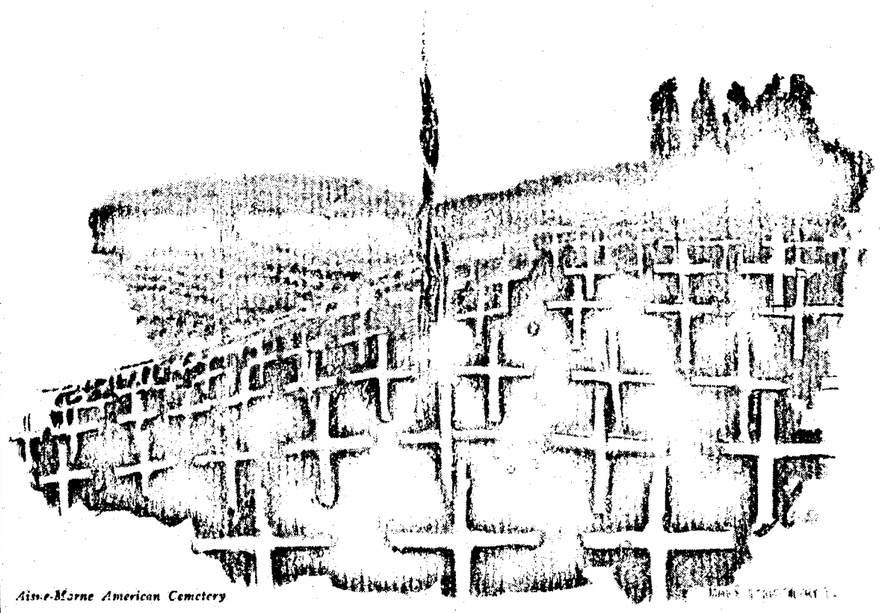
> Brother and sister shared and faced hand in hand that youthful interest, that astonishment in the awakening of the sensual urge, which clothed itself in spiritual forms, spiritual needs, and in sensual forms . . . and the many errors and confusions that spring from them.

This passage hints at the "sublimation" so emphasized by Freud, the normal turning of sexual energy into intellectual, artistic and religious

(*Continued on Page 4, Col. 1*)

THE WORST BOOK OF THE MONTH

EIMI. By e. e. cummings.
6½ x 8½. Pp. 464. $3.00
New York: Covici-Friede.



Aisne-Marne American Cemetery

$20,000,000

THE NEW AMERICAN RELIGION

by LEONARD ROWE

MAN'S persistent and ineradicable yearning for a land of make-believe, and his need for an escape and refuge from the harsh and unyielding realities of his daily toil have, from time immemorial, found their outlet in religion. The wizardries and necromancies of savage rites; the unctuous flattery that the Jews laid to their souls that they were Yahveh's chosen people and which made them join their vindictive God in lashing the uncircumcised with vituperation and hatred; the sweet beatitudes of holy Christian writ whereby slaves and lepers were made to believe that they were the betters of their Roman overlords; the comforting promise to the poor Mormon whose concupiscence was thwarted by the stark reality of a slatternly wife—and Congressional laws—that in Heaven he would be attended by bevies of toothsome handmaidens; these were the seraphic joys and angelic visions of the old-time traditional religions. But these religions are dead in America. True, churches abound in diverse multiplicity but they are mere hollow forms and have long ceased to have any real meaning to their ostensible worshippers.

These past fifty years, such religious spirit as there was in America manifested itself in Noble Experiments, Prohibition crusades, lynching bees, wars-for-democracy, Catholic-baitings, Red-huntings, liquor raids and moral "clean-ups". But these holy outbursts have the disadvantage of being too intermittent and too hazardous. Besides, the growing worship of material comfort, the preoccupation with mechanical gadgets, and the apotheosis of the machine have diminished the old Messianic fervor and have stressed the need for a slick modern religion as up-to-date as electrical refrigerators and as sanitary as cellophane. In the new dispensation where the ownership of a Packard means more than all the beatitudes of Holy Writ, the worship of a wrathful Jew-God or of a gentle Shepherd-God is as out-of-date as unpackaged breakfast foods and anonymous union suits. The crying need is answered: the Voice From The Burning Bush is ADVERTISING.

Just as Freudian wish-fulfillments and opiate escapes from reality were the foundations of the ancient standard religions, so are they the basic elements of Advertising: but in forms more comprehensible and more appealing to the material, objective and mundane imagination of the American. It is a religion that he can understand and feel—full of speed, pep and hot-cha. The American woman would be bored at the mere suggestion of modeling her life after one of the saints in order that she may *some day* be received into the Angelic Choir: what she wants is to look like a movie star *right now*.

Does she go to church, then, and pray for the fulfillment of this pious wish? No; she turns to the advertising pages of her modern prayer book (say, *Photoplay, True Confessions,* or the chaste *Ladies' Home Journal*) and discovers that if she uses a certain hair-shampoo, a certain nail-polish and a certain soap she will inevitably become as beautiful as Loretta Young. She covets Sex Appeal more than Salvation; hence an advertisement of a new eye-lash curler that will give her eyes a languorous Greta Garbo soulfulness will fetch her more than any soul-saving sermon. The bride whose husband balks at her barbarous cooking turns desperately to the advertisements in *Good Housekeeping* which impliedly hold out the hope that if she uses Crisco, Gold Medal Flour and Jello her cooking will surpass that of Voisin's and Larue's. And that if she washes her dishes in Lux her hands will become more beautiful than those of Leonardo's "La Gioconda."

Man's age-old rebellion against the physical limitations of his corporeal frame and his displeasure with some of its grosser physiological functions had, in traditional religions, the compensatory promise of immortal life. But the American with his practical, efficient do-it-now spirit, is not content to wait for immortality to rid his body of ungenteel animal sweats and smells. He believes in having his physiological cake and eating it, with the result that the advertisements make him bathe, gargle, spray, syringe, physic and deodorize himself until he is as immaculate and aseptic as a surgical instrument. In the new catechism he learns that his business career will be ruined and his social life blighted if ever he is guilty of that most "insidious" of human offenses (one that even his best friends won't tell him about), Halitosis. And the girl who was often a bridesmaid but never a bride discovers that she owes her misfortune to Body Odor which all the perfumes of Arabia and Fifth Avenue cannot begin to combat unless she switches to Lifebuoy Soap.

The beautiful dream-world that Advertising has erected thus rids itself of the smells, odors (except perfume *odeurs*), spittings, belchings, and retchings of this dreary life. In the American Elysian Fields everything is refined and prettified. Euphemisms grow lush and luxuriant. *Epiderma phytosis* is raised to the virile dignity of Athlete's Foot. Toilet paper becomes quite swank in its new appellation of bath-room tissue, especially when it comes in delicate pastel *nuances*. The classic, though humble, underdrawers are metamorphosed into progressively daintier forms beginning with underthings and ending with underdainties and underprettics, and such piquant variants as step-ins, teddies, scanties and Gandhi-Panties. Constipation loses its indelicacy when it is dubbed with the vaguer and more general term, irregularity.

To Ted Lewis's query, "Is Everybody Happy?", Advertising responds with a thunderous affirmative. Botticelli's angels smile not more sweetly than the American housewife pictured in the advertisements cleaning her window with Bon Ami. And the carefree American husband bolting his breakfast cereal (full of vitamins) is a picture of virile strength that puts Greece's Phidian athletes to shame. His physiognomy is a composite of the features of the current male cinema stars: *ergo,* eat Bran Flakes and look like Clark Gable.

The old religions had their battle cries. So has the new religion: "Nature In The Raw Is Seldom Mild," "Four Out Of Five Have It," and "Wrapped In Cellophane"—these are the new shibboleths.

REQUIRED READING

"She has done the translation so beautifully that one is glad that nobody has done it before."
—J. C. Squire (Editor of the *London Mercury*) in the London *Observer*, reviewing Helen Waddell's translation of *Manon Lescaut.*

Required reading: *Manon Lescaut.* Translated by D. C. Moylan. London, 1841; *The Story of Manon Lescaut and of the Chevalier des Grieux.* Translated by A. W. Gundry. Chicago, 1886; *The History of Manon Lescaut and of the Chevalier des Grieux.* Boston, 1906; *The History of Manon Lescaut and of the Chevalier des Grieux.* New York, 1920; *The History of Manon Lescaut and the Chevalier des Grieux.* Translated, with an Introduction, by George Dunning Gribble. London, 1925.

A FORGOTTEN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN

by HERBERT ASBURY

NO exact count was ever made of the number of dance halls, melodeons, concert saloons and other dives that flourished during the early days of San Francisco's Barbary Coast, but there must have been at least several hundred. With various changes in name and ownership, many survived until the earthquake and fire of 1906 devastated the entire district. They included such celebrated resorts as the Bull Run, Canterbury Hall, the Louisiana, the Thunderbolt, the Cock o' the Walk, Hell's Kitchen, the Opera Comique, the Dew Drop Inn, the Rosebud, Every Man Welcome, Brooks' Melodeon, the Tulip, the Occidental, the Arizona, the Montana, and the Coliseum, the management of which also, and pridefully, called it the Big Dive. There was also, during the middle of the eighteen-seventies, a particularly vicious deadfall at Pacific and Kearny Streets. It was known as the Billy Goat because of the peculiarly repulsive combination of odors, derived from stale beer, damp sawdust and unwashed humanity, with which its smoke-laden atmosphere was permeated. The proprietor, bouncer and chief bartender of the Billy Goat was a middle-aged Irishwoman called, in the expressive nomenclature of the Barbary Coast, Pigeon-Toed Sal. She kept order in her establishment with a derringer and a hickory wagon-spoke, and was very adept in the use of either. She not only encouraged, but if necessary participated in, any sort of crime on her premises so long as she received half the proceeds. She sold steam beer for a dime a bottle, and vile whiskey at five cents a large glassful. When served to a man who was known to have a few dollars in his pocket, they were more likely than not to contain knockout potions.

For several years this fragrant den vied with the Bull Run for the distinction of being the toughest place in San Francisco. The police, however, were inclined to award the palm to the latter, which was operated by Bull Run Allen, so called because he had fought in the Union Army at both the first and second battles of Manassas. Allen was an enormous man who always wore a snow-white ruffled shirt, in the bosom of which gleamed a huge cluster of diamonds. He also possessed a very large and very red nose, about which he was extremely sensitive, and which might have outshone his gems if he hadn't kept it coated with flour. This he dusted upon his mighty proboscis from a large salt-shaker which he carried in his pocket. He was at length shot and killed by a Barbary Coast Ranger, but the police never knew the exact cause of the quarrel.

Allen's resort occupied a three-story building at Pacific Street and Sullivan Alley, with a dance hall and bar in the cellar, another on the street floor, and an assignation house upstairs. Before the main entrance stood a large screen covered with violently-colored wall paper, which was renewed two or three times each week, so that it always appeared fresh and immaculate. But the moral tone of the establishment was anything but immaculate. Allen often said that the motto of his place was "anything goes here." He employed between forty and fifty girls during the Bull Run's period of greatest prosperity, and they were notorious as the most brazen, hopeless and abandoned women on the Barbary Coast. In most of the dives the drinks served to the pretty waiter girls and the female performers were innocuous, and it was considered right and proper for them to dispose of unwanted beverages by dumping them into the big brass spittoons which were scattered about the floors. At the Bull Run, however, the girls were given real liquor, and were compelled to drink it, as their antics when drunk were considered an amusing feature of the resort, the more so since Allen was very liberal in the use of cantharides to stimulate those of his employees whom he considered sluggish.

Practically all of the Bull Run women drank beer by choice, having full knowledge of the dynamitic effect of the dive's whiskey and brandy. But, regardless of the number of glasses which they poured down their throats, they were not permitted to leave the dance floor or the stage often enough to obtain the toilet relief which the consumption of large quantities necessitated. If one of Bull Run Allen's pretty waiter girls or performers became unconscious from liquor, as frequently happened, she was carried upstairs and laid on a bed, and sexual privileges were sold to all comers while she lay helpless in a drunken stupor. The price ranged from twenty-five cents to one dollar, depending upon the age and beauty of the girl. It was not unusual for a girl to be abused by as many as thirty or forty men in the course of a single night. She was supposed to receive half the revenue from this sort of prostitution, but was invariably cheated.

The Opera Comique at Jackson and Kearny Streets, better known as Murderer's Corner, employed French and Spanish women, both as performers and as pretty waiter girls, and offered the bawdiest and most obscene shows of any melodeon or concert saloon on the Barbary Coast. It was owned by Happy Jack Harrington, who was

(*Continued on Page 2, Col. 1*)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 3)

considered the Beau Brummel of the Coast and was invariably attired in the height of fashion. His favorite costume consisted of a high-crowned plug hat, beneath which his hair was puffed out in curls, a frock coat, a white shirt with a ruffled bosom, a fancy waistcoat, and cream or lavender colored trousers so tight that he looked as though he had been melted and poured into them. His principal adornment and greatest pride, however, was his silky brown mustache, which was so long that he could tie its ends under his chin. With the aid of a woman variously known as Dutch Louise and Big Louise, Happy Jack ran the Opera Comique for several years, but he was an earnest drinker and spent all their profits on liquor.

Early in 1878, while recovering from an attack of delirium tremens, Happy Jack came under the influence of the Praying Band, a temperance organization of devout women who periodically invaded the Barbary Coast and annoyed the dive-keepers with their efforts to reclaim the debauched wrecks who lurched along the dismal thoroughfares. They were not particularly efficient, as their usual procedure was to surround a drunken man and ask him with great earnestness, "Have you seen Jesus?" Few had. They caught Happy Jack as he rebounded from the fearsome land of the pink elephant and the purple crocodile, and almost before he knew it he had professed religion, sold his dive, received a Bible with his name in it, and had been installed as manager of a little restaurant in California Street, far from the temptations of the Barbary Coast. He announced that he had forsaken his erstwhile evil ways forever, much to the disgust of Big Louise, who flatly refused to accompany him on what she considered a perilous adventure. A few weeks later she married a rich miner and left San Francisco. She always retained a measure of affection for Happy Jack, however, and frequently sent him money.

Having pointed out to Harrington the sunlit summit of the mountain of salvation, the ladies of the Praying Band left him to make his way upward as best he could. Naturally, he failed to make progress, since he was by nature a drunkard and a thief. Less than a month after his supposed regeneration he was found lying drunk in the gutter before his new restaurant, his Bible clasped to his breast. Within another few weeks he had abandoned the business, which in March of 1878 was disposed of, lock, stock and barrel, at a Sheriff's sale for less than two hundred dollars.

Happy Jack returned to the Barbary Coast, where he opened a resort at Pacific and Sansome Streets, and became again a shining light among the Rangers. He cherished a bitter hatred of the Praying Band, and soon after the opening of his new dive he engaged an auditorium, Platt's Hall, and announced that he would lecture on "The True Inwardness of the Gospel Temperance Movement, or, the Potato Peeled." He hired a brass band for the occasion, but when he mounted the rostrum he found that his audience consisted of six newspaper reporters and one drunken tramp who had wandered in by mistake. Nevertheless, Happy Jack lectured, berating the Praying Band for luring him from his dive and the comforting warmth of the Barbary Coast and casting him, alone and unprotected, into the midst of honest men, among whom he knew not how to conduct himself. He complained that when he finally abandoned the restaurant project he had not a cent in the world, and that only by putting through a little deal with marked cards had he been able to amass enough money to open a new concert saloon.

"I stand before you," he said, "as a frightful example of the destructive effects of temperance, but though crushed to earth I will rise again!"

One of the favorite loafing and drinking places of the Barbary Coast Rangers, especially those of sporting proclivities, was Denny O'Brien's saloon across the way from the Opera Comique. In the cellar below O'Brien's resort was a pit wherein were staged dog fights and battles between terriers and huge gray rats which the street boys trapped around the wharves and sold to O'Brien at from ten to twenty-five cents each, depending upon the size and ferocity of the rodent. On a Saturday night, about a month after his appearance on the lecture platform, Happy Jack Harrington went to O'Brien's and began drinking steadily. During the evening he became involved in a quarrel, over some trivial matter, with Billy Dwyer, who had just arrived in San Francisco from Virginia City, where he had acquired considerable renown as a prize fighter and a rough and tumble brawler. Dwyer raised his arm to strike Harrington, and Happy Jack drew his bowie knife, which he carried slung under his left armpit, and stabbed the pugilist in the stomach. Dwyer died within a few hours, and Harrington was convicted of manslaughter and sent to San Quentin Prison.

Nothing more was ever heard of him on the Barbary Coast.

John Drinkwater

Old Doctor Shaw, the Fabian horse-doctor, is coming to town! Step up, ladies and gents, and try a bottle of his Marxian liniment! Cures all aches and pains, including the New Humanism, the Depression, Government by the People, Buchmanism, Hitlerism, and the R.F.C.—Advt.

DESIGN FOR LOVING

(Each Performance Followed by Numerous Parties)

An Impression of the Contemporary Fashionable British Drama

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

Cast of Characters

Lord Derek, a hermaphrodite
The Duke of Mintington, his father, an Onanist
The Duchess, his mother, a Lesbian
Daphne, his sister, a flagellant
Lady Vi Twyning, his sister's friend, an autoeroticist, with tribade tendencies
Tewks, his manservant, a homosexual and transvestist
Hoskins, his butler, an exhibitionist with Undinist proclivities

Scene: Lord Derek's flat in Charles Street, Mayfair. Lord Derek, the Duke, the Duchess, Daphne and Lady Vi have just finished dinner.

Derek

I say, mother darling, you *are* a bitch, aren't you, my sweet?

The Duchess

Don't let your dear father, the lovable bastard, overhear you saying that, my pet. You know how finical he is: *finical de siècle*, as dear Lady Lavatoire was saying wittily only yesterday at the dear Countess's.

(Enter Hoskins. He serves cognac, V.V.S.O.P., languidly setting a flame to each glass with a pink taper.)

Daphne

Who were at the Carlton, Claridge's, the Berkeley, the Ritz, Malmaison, Boulestin's, Quaglino's, Taglioni's and the Embassy at lunch?

Lady Vi

Tony and Gerald were having lunch together, Cecil and Neville were at another table, Geoffrey and Ivor were together at another, young Lord Bellaver was lunching with young Lord Ferraby, Giles Fenwick was in a corner with Bramleigh Hutchinson, Robin St. Vincent had Ronnie Fay with him, young Lord Crawley was with Freddie Finch—and Margot and Lady Lacey, Auriol and Beryl, Rosamond and Connie, Phyllis and Gladys, Leona and Zoozoo Potter, Gwen and Lady Maudlestone, were together at the other tables.

The Duke (under his breath)

Acidulous tart! (*Aloud*) I say, Derek, have you seen the Duke of Southminster lately?

Derek

I adore him! *(He goes to the piano, seats himself and plays very passionately.)*

Enter Tewks

Tewks

Will you wear the magenta silk pajamas tonight, sir, or shall I lay out the jade ones with the jacinth monogram?

Lady Vi

My God, Derek, don't tell me that you are turning masculine—in these days!

Derek

Worm!

Lady Vi

If you are alluding to yourself, my dear, aren't you paying a somewhat exaggerated compliment to your *foudre anatomique*?

(Derek, in a frenzy of indignation, smashes a vase.)

The Duchess

I think I shall motor to Juan les Pins Thursday. I promised dear Maribelle—

The Duke

I think *I* shall motor to Antibes Thursday. I promised dear François—

Derek (wildly)

Shut up! Shut up, for God's sake, all of you! I shall want the Rolls on Thursday as I promised Dickie Tolliver I'd spend the week-end with him at Cannes!

Daphne

(looking at Lady Vi significantly)

Let's stay right here, darling, just us two, cozy and comfy-like.

Lady Vi

Why not stay on with us, Duchess? London is exciting at this time of the year.

Derek

(adjusting a bloom to his lapel and speaking to himself)

Love: the refuge of the unimaginative. Marriage: the diversion of the bourgeoisie. Children: the offspring of off-shoots of Darwinian philosophy. Women:—*(His epigrammatic virtuosity fails him for the moment and he returns to the piano and plays an imitation of an imitation of a Viennese waltz.)*

Lady Vi

Charming, pet. What is it?

Derek

A little thing I dashed off myself. I call it "When It's Pansy Time in Capri."

Hoskins (to Tewks)

Sweet, aren't it?

Tewks

Delicious, says I.

(They covertly hold hands.)

The Duchess

Everytime I think of the dear Principessa in one of those dreadful marble bathrooms at the Prince de Galles, I shudder.

The Duke

It is the same with me whenever I think of the dear Earl eating those stale pâtés at Foyot's—Pâtés' farewell tour, I call them. *(All break down utterly and roar with laughter.)*

Daphne (lighting a cigarette)

Life is one long convulsive sequence of ups and downs.

Derek (madly)

Sex, sex, sex, always sex:—I sicken of it!

Lady Vi

The world has its morals, its poor little morals, its droll little morals, its puny little morals, and we have ours. Who shall say which is right?

Derek

Rather macabre, I call it! But you're a clever little dear, that's what you are—a clever little dear!

Daphne

Rather macabre, I call it.

The Duke

Rather!

The Duchess

Stop it! Stop it! Else I shall go mad! *(She vaults over the sofa and takes Daphne and Lady Vi in her arms.)*

The Duchess

In Lauterbach hab' ich mein' Strumpf verloren.

Daphne (archly)

What does that mean?

The Duchess

"Cheerio", in French.

Derek

(impassionedly smashing another vase)

Illusion! What the world needs is a recapture of illusion. Without it, the human race—the human race that has slid back into the slime—the slime that has got into all our eyes and ears and minds and on all our evening clothes—the human race will perish. It has invented inventions, it has invented still more inventions, and has it progressed? It has slid back into the slime—the slime that has got into our hair and nostrils and souls. No more illusions, only a wet, damp fog that obscures all, everything! Civilization is lost, all is lost in the slime—the slime that has got into our beings, into our noses, into our eyelashes. But this dear old England that we all love so much will wriggle through! Come, all of you!

(Derek, the Duke, the Duchess, Daphne, Lady Vi, Tewks and Hoskins all go to bed together.)

Curtain

THE CHILD AND THE SCHOOL

by THEODORE DREISER

AS I see it, the training of children in their social relations—national and international—should be the main function of our public schools. Boys and girls should be made to see themselves as a part of a great mass of people with whom they are connected and to whom they are socially, economically and in other ways responsible as co-sharers in all the benefits of that immense mass-coördination known as organized society. Early and clearly, it seems to me, they should be apprised of its immense ramifications and duties, of which they must be a part, however humble, connected with it all by the fact that they live in a house built for them by others, ride in automobiles manufactured for them by men like their fathers, eat food grown by farmers, shipped by railroad clerks, cooked by their mothers—and in return for all this, that it is their duty as well as their fathers' to help to build houses for others, build roads, do something. In sum, children must be made to see that they are only a few members of a wide race with other little boys and girls all over the world. They must be taught that neither the necessities nor the more interesting and pleasurable phases of their lives can be had without the contributions of all the individuals of the world working to supply them.

Instead of being taught submission and weak servitude to God, as a philosophy of life, children should be taught their rights. One would think, in going through school, that the individual American citizen had no rights. No mention is ever made of them. I would, at the outset, instruct pupils concerning their property rights. They should know certain things, as, for example, that notice should be given before eviction; that when a place is rented by the week, there must be a week's notice to leave before anyone can be put out, or with a rental by the month, a month's notice. This would save a lot of corporate abuse to the worker and his family..

More, children today should be filled with knowledge of that which is the most important of all: the real basis of organized society. A man is supposed to receive from society in return for his work the necessities and comforts of society as provided by other members of the community. If the people but understood this and were alive, the poor and the middle classes would not be so submissive to their oppression by our present-day corporations—or their predecessors, the divine-right masters of the past. Yet although the Church has long made oppression of the poor a sin, it has done nothing, so far as I can see, to lessen it.

The Editors feel that British beauty is inadequately represented on the lecture platforms of America. What this country needs is more Storm Jamesons and Rosamond Lehmanns and fewer Chestertons, Guedallas and Louis Goldings.

OUR HARD-HEARTED CHILDREN

by EMILY CLARK

WHEN the American novel, about fifteen years ago, experienced a change greater than any of the minor changes to which it has since been subjected, a phenomenon not yet explained was the most notable element of this change. It remains today still the most notable. Authentic emotions rather than sentimental imaginings were the basis of the new American novel. And the word "authentic" is peculiarly appropriate here, for at that same remote date it began to acquire new connotations, a significance, a vogue, which it still retains. Hunger jealousy, horror, hate, lust, anger, grief, other equally authentic emotions at this period came into their proper literary inheritance. This was right and just, for American writers and American readers had, with a few distinguished exceptions, ignored these unpleasant but undeniable emotions for many years. However, two other equally authentic emotions, love and pity, at this time became subjects to evoke all the shyness, fears and false modesty hitherto evoked by lust.

This is an inexplicable trend of our time, for love is an emotion as real, as independent of sentimentality, as incontrovertible, and in many cases as unpleasant, as the emotions so freely, truly and admirably dealt with in our literature today. Since affection and pity can thrive as independently of sentimentality as a sex emotion can flourish independently of sentimentality, there is no sufficient reason for ignoring these feelings when the fashion for dealing sentimentally with emotions, pleasant or unpleasant, has happily died. Love stories are so scarce that their absence is now almost unrecognizable to most of our critics.

This was surely proved when, a few years ago, "A Farewell to Arms" appeared. The book was hailed, and properly, as a brilliant novel. It was also hailed, to my mind bewilderingly, as a great love story. I was, and am, confused by this. It has seemed always to me a wartime sex episode, described as perfectly as a situation so characteristic of the world at war, a situation repeated hundreds of times in both Europe and America during those years, deserves to be described.

At a time when every passion was awake and flaming, nothing could more appropriately be recorded than the adventure of the American soldier and the English nurse, so plainly an inevitable outgrowth of the hotbed of war. Had Catherine, the nurse, lived through the war, their common attraction would no doubt have ended when the war was ended. I think it probable that Mr. Hemingway felt that Catherine's death averted a ruder ending, although the critics, apparently, did not. It is so plain, throughout this story of an overwhelming attraction, that these two persons had nothing whatever to say to one another, possessed only one shared interest. It seems to me equally plain that the man, at least, had experienced throughout his life neither affection nor compassion for anyone. Nor does this fact subtract merit from a book which I greatly admire, but merely serves to illustrate an inexplicable truth.

The same lack is apparent in many other books of the Hemingway decade in America. The novels of Scott Fitzgerald are perhaps, for this reason, unique in his generation. They possess the true and delicate quality of feeling which gives the work of Rosamond Lehmann a value and significance which it would have owned at any period, but more especially today. In England, however, compassion and affection enjoy a rather wider literary employment than in America. I have hoped through many years that Scott Fitzgerald would write another novel, since he is aware of an essential part of human psychology that Mr. Hemingway, Mr. Faulkner, and others of their age, endowed with powers invaluable to any writer, fail utterly to consider. Thomas Wolfe, too, is at variance with the cult of inhumanity.

This shyness, amounting to fear, concerning the more humane and civilized emotions may be indirectly connected with the cult of youth. For never at any period has there been so great a fear and distrust of age, even maturity, as at this present moment. Affection and pity are, unarguably, mature emotions, since they have no part in the spiritual equipment of any child. Like the journey of those children whom Richard Hughes has made unforgetable, the majority of our writers set forth gaily on innocent voyages, exciting, adventurous, vibrant with ecstasy and horror, full of innocent brutality. A curious atmosphere of unsophistication pervades their books, peopled with men and women who live so vividly within the three dimensions accorded them, but lack the fourth dimension of humanity as utterly as the three-walled room of the stage lacks the fourth wall of privacy, the single other element necessary to complete realism.

Since literary inhumanity probably owes its being to the new, unnatural scale of values always created by any war, and the equally artificial scale created by an unprecedented and reckless prosperity, the normal scale of values by which we lived before war and wealth deluged and nearly submerged us, may possibly be re-established in our period of poverty. The more humane emotions may again receive literary recognition. As life becomes simpler the more complex experiences of the mind and heart may again win the respect which was formerly theirs. In any case, I hope so. An occasional contact with the simplicity and the hardness of a child is vitalizing and refreshing, but becomes, with repetition, unsatisfying and irritating. And the more adolescent, uncivilized, even savage aspects of the human race are not the aspects best adapted to hard, regular, exacting artistic employment.

COMPULSORY LEISURE

by ERNEST BOYD

FOR reasons so painful that I will not distress the reader by mentioning them, it is a common thing during these last three years to hear American business men say that they have at last found time to leave their offices at a reasonably early hour and enjoy a little leisure. Having nothing with which to beguile the hours from nine till six, they depart from their places of non-business and devote the afternoon either to reducing their waistlines playing squash, or adding to them by advancing the cocktail hour to the early afternoon. Some regard this new dispensation not altogether with digust; others are doubly incensed, because they not only resent the causes of this enforced leisure, but object to the phenomenon of leisure in itself.

In all the analyses of the Puritan mind and its remoter ramifications in American life, nobody has ever troubled to point out the strangest of all the superstitions so cheerfully accepted from the Hebrew Scriptures in this country. I refer to the notion, derived from Genesis, that work is in itself a virtue, and that Jehovah is particularly pleased when the descendants of Adam emulate that wretched man by earning their bread in the sweat of their faces. I remember that the first afternoon I ever walked down Fifth Avenue I was surprised by the overwhelming majority of women unescorted by men, at an hour when, in any European metropolis, mankind sorts itself, after the immemorial fashion, into couples—"male and female created He them," so to speak. This latter passage from the Pentateuch was ignored. On questioning a lawyer friend I was informed that it might be all very well for decadent Europeans and American artists to appear at leisure in that shameless fashion but an American citizen with a serious position in this world could not afford to be seen taking tea or escorting ladies to the picture gallery or the dressmaker's. To be at leisure at that hour would be a sign that his business was ruined.

Afterwards, by exasperated experience, I was to learn that office hours as office hours, apart from the work achieved during them, constitute a phenomenon regarded with considerable awe and veneration by every true-born American. People I have known who were so fortunately situated that they could ignore all the usually accepted forms of allegedly useful activity were those who caught the eight o'clock train with a punctuality and a cheerfulness unknown to the clock-punching wage-slave. They not only worked when it was not necessary but they put themselves to great inconvenience to do so, and the nature of their work was hardly such as to inspire the exaltation of a great spiritual or intellectual enthusiasm. Lying in bed, after a night rendered sleepless by the twittering and screeching of innumerable birds, I used to wonder why Jones didn't call up and say it was a fine morning, that he might go out and kill something, or play with a ball, but that he would not catch the 7:55, nor any later train that day.

First, overlooking the blessed words "Puritan tradition", I sought the cause of this strange perversity in the obvious and tragic fact that Uncle Sam has no career to offer to a man of independent means who does not wish to be idle. Money-making—at least, in theory—is still the only career open to his talents. Outside of the arts and, to a lesser extent, of the professions, there is no opening that an educated, cultured man, uninterested in mobocracy, can enter with the illusion, if not the conviction, that he is serving his country, maintaining his position, preserving his self-respect, and is not merely a slave to the fetich of work for work's sake. Uncle Sam, prodigal of his first-rate men and of his resources, does not care. Why put one's talents as a financier at the disposal of the Treasury if you can make a fortune and be appreciated at your true worth in a banking or broking firm? Ask Uncle Sam; he apparently doesn't know and doesn't care. Foreign governments think differently and benefit accordingly.

In short, the European denunciations of the "Idle Rich" have little or no application in America. Here the Rich have yet to take up the noble art of constructive idleness, of useful leisure. Even the not-too-rich, or the plain well-to-do, might speculate as to whether it is better to confront the unemployed problem by contributing to charity, or by vacating jobs which would be gratefully accepted by people who have to work in order to live. So long as Jehovah, literally or figuratively, smiles exclusively on those who work, irrespective of the nature of the work, or the necessities of the case, so long will that 7:55 be caught, and so long will adorable young women step into their Cords, after a nice day at the office, and spend their week's honorarium on some flowers for the opening that night. The only thing that seems to have thwarted the ways of the Almighty in this connection is the sad fact that Business is not what it used to be.

VIVE LA FRANCE!

"Ces deux lignes (de chemin de fer) qui à leur terminus, se recontrent sans se joindre traduisent-elles l'impossibilité pour l'Orient et l'Occident de l'Europe de communiquer jamais? . . . *Twins never meet*, disait Kipling."
—Marc Chadourne in "l'U R. S. S. Sans Passion."

The Editors and Publisher wish to take this occasion to re-emphasize the fact that The American Spectator has no connection whatsoever with any book publishing house.

Hitler: The Lilliputian Mussolini.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TABLOID MANAGING EDITORS

by WALTER WINCHELL

THE seasoned newspaperman usually dismisses the query: "What is a managing editor?" with this grunt: "The rubber on the pencil!"

Perhaps Comrades Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur left little or nothing to be added to the Typical Managing Editor when they adroitly designed "Front Page"—but!

I am better acquainted with the gents who pilot the tabloid gazettes—those tiny journals with the big circulations—and after a decade of profitable earaches under their thumbs and boots, I am finally rewarded with an invitation to prepare a thesis: Why is a tabloid managing editor?

I don't know Why. But I know *What*

A managing editor is not a necessary evil. He is an unnecessary overhead. He gets in the way of the capables on his staff (who invariably are responsible for the success of his paper, if any) and he rates whatever glory goes with the sheet's achievements—when, of course, the circulation tilts. When it steadily totters, however, he is fired. And when he is fired, he hastens to his apartment where he breathlessly scribbles an "exposé" in which he reveals All, his recent newspaper publisher serving as the target. Then he sits back and feels a little better. Until he gets the royalty statements.

The handful of managing editors with good manners and ditto character whom I've encountered in my brief journalistic span (eight years—almost eighty!) offset the other sort, of course. And isn't it a pity that manuscripts about the Goodies haven't as profitable a market as the Baddies? Goodies, no matter the profession, make for dull copy. Therefore, this wordage on some of the naughties.

II

My favorite nightmare is as follows. Several thousands of editions ago, a tabloid managing editor I know well worried his contemporaries with his leaps on sensational "true" life stories of colorful criminals. He had scored one scoop after the other whenever a notorious character became news—by clinching the desperado's "Own Story." It was a new trick.

This was arranged through the criminal's attorney, whose fee included the mention of the lawyer's name in at least every fourth paragraph, a promise from the editor that the editorial page would do what it possibly could to arouse and promote sympathy for the prisoner, and a satisfactory sum of money, most of which was to go to the lawyer "to save" his client. This was sane and sound business, to be sure.

The attorney, a humanitarian, owned a factory in Manhattan, New York. In this factory he employed only ex-convicts—from the foreman down. It was his way of lending a hand to men who had strayed, and who, after paying their debt to the state, wanted to behave themselves. He paid them decent wages, and very few people in New York knew of the factory or its personnel. The men thus carried on with their heads up.

The front pages one day suddenly thundered with the report of the capture of a famous criminal, the most intelligent bandit in the last two decades. He refused permission to release his "story," even to his lawyer (the factory owner and friend of the managing editor), and instructed that no newspaper get any more information on him than the police records revealed. He wasn't that sort, that's all.

So the irritated managing editor went ahead, anyhow, and prepared his own version of the renowned prisoner's history—and when the fellow saw the "serial" in the paper he suffered greater torture than the fear of the approaching hangman.

His lawyer, of course, was blamed by the client for crossing him—and he died with the noose around his neck, bitter over his attorney's failure to stop the faked documents, which continued after his death. This led to a fierce quarrel between the counsel and the editor, and they parted enemies, the lawyer promising the editor that henceforth he would have to find a new sucker to get such exclusive fables.

The managing editor retaliated in the only style that he knew. He exposed the lawyer's factory which gave ex-convicts another chance. Not many editions later, the police hounded the fellows, other papers picked up the sensational facts, business hit a new low, and the factory closed. Only the gods know what became of those wretched men, who are met with scorn when they have only a recommendation from a warden or prison chaplain to offer.

Then there's the managing editor who promised a Broadway showman that he wouldn't publish the news of an "orgy" that took place in the producer's own theatre. An undraped girl in a bathtub, half-filled (the tub) with what was said to be hooch, was the feature of the event. The producer had urged his invited guests to keep mum for fear of the consequences. They all duly kept their word that they would. The invited managing editor, however, who was a close intimate of the showman, "broke" the beat—playing it up sensationally—and screamed that Broadway was "decaying" and smelling up America. He related that whiskey and lager flowed freely at the party, and the publicity resulted in his friend, the showman's, arrest by Federal revenuers, whose evidence, however, was not enough to convict the defendant. He went to the Atlanta hoosegow, nevertheless, on a charge of perjury the same week.

There's your Managing Editor Character Number Two.

A diverting (in a way) fact dealing with another managing editor's indirect sweetness lies in this report. He was smitten with a pretty thing from the Theatre Belt, a girl who "doubles in brass," as the vulgarians put it. She was at home, that is, in the arms of either a lad or a lass. His paper ran a beauty contest the same month that he met the Lez-said-about-her-the-better. To prove his devotion to her (he didn't know her well, yet), he arranged a job for her on the sheet's payroll. He assigned her to chaperon the winning contestants (average age, 16) all the way to Galveston, Texas!

III

I trust my reader will permit me to remind him that I've encountered some Delightful Fellows among the managing editors—human beings—all right guys—gentlemen of the press. Men whose manners I have aped, who schooled me, whose patience and tolerance gave me what sugary breaks I've had. To them I am indebted. But they know that. The managing editors everywhere who print my trivia must know that this manuscript is dedicated only to certain editors I've photographed in New York City.

Many of my readers are familiar with the feuds and tiffs I've enjoyed with some managing editors. Some of the quarrels have been prolonged only because it is dangerous in New York to strike an antagonist who wears spectacles or is otherwise handicapped. You can be jailed, fined or both, you know. It must have been nicer in the old days—when journalists who disliked each other intensely used their fists instead of their typewriters to settle a dispute. Arthur Brisbane, for instance, who swapped blows à la Dempsey and Firpo with another well known, now dead, in front of the old *World* building.

Not a few of the tabloid managing editors, by the way, have been fouled by their gods. Many of them are physical defectives—and I have wondered at times if that accounts for their extreme bitterness on and off the paper. I make note of it now, not to sneer at their sore afflictions, but to reveal for the first time that most of them, who are so handicapped, probably think they have good reason to want others to share their Hell with them.

Recently another managing editor in New York inspired this. He decided to trim the overhead, but he couldn't decide on which reporter should be the victim of the depression. He eliminated several prospects for the breadlines after learning that they couldn't afford to be without a job. Finally, he sent for one of his costlier and better men, and proceeded with this heart-to-heart chat.

"Joe," said the chief, "I wanted to talk to you about something. How're you fixed for money?"

The unsuspecting news-collector, a faithful worker who had distinguished himself many times in the paper's service, breathlessly replied: "Boss, I sure am—and any part of it is yours! If you need coin, I can go to the bank in the morning and get you anything up to $3,000!"

"Well," replied the editor, who fingered the corner of his desk because he couldn't look the good-natured employee in the orbs, "then I won't have to worry about you. You've money. You're fired!"

Then there's the managing editor, who served one of New York's more conservative papers until recently. A heavy-drinking fellow he was, and his staff members often found him in an alley near the office helplessly intoxicated—and took him to his apartment.

They rescued him from the elements, and the illicit who pass in the night—until it was learned that he couldn't stand the thought of having anyone work for him who had "anything on him." Twice he dismissed reporters who had taken him home "blind." Weeks later, that is, and the reason always was that they weren't hitting on all cylinders.

But the word got around about his sensitiveness to colleagues "who knew." So one bitter night last Winter, when he was sprawled in the snow-covered gutter, a block from his editorial sanctum, two of his men stood by his prostrate form and wondered what to do about him.

They finally reached a verdict. "No," said one of them, "if we take him home and he finds out we picked him up—good-by jobby." They recognized an approaching colleague, and ducked into an alley. The colleague, who was in too strong to lose his post, called a cab, instructed the pilot to deposit his boss in the hack, and accompanied his managing editor to his rooms, where he put him to bed.

The editor was soon after dishonorably discharged for humiliating his paper by being a party to a political farce which involved the paper, and worse yet—got himself mixed up in the Lindbergh baby kidnapping hoax in Virginia.

That's what some managing editors are made of, poor things. Managing editors, mind you, from some of our worst and from the best newspapers. No better nor worse, perhaps, than some of the newspaper owners from whom they were spawned. Newspaper publishers, that is, who must titter in their tombs when they hear of modern newspaper feuds and reminisce over the fierce fights they themselves took part in. When even the most hifalutin editorial pages, governed by the owners, went in for humor instead of indignation.

Take this delightful epic in journalistic wars—between the N. Y. *Evening Post* and The N. Y. *Sun*—some years ago. The two papers were just as sore at each other, at the time, as you probably have been with your severest critic. The *Post* called the *Sun* a "yellow dog." The *Sun* stifled its contemporary with this luscious lambasting: "The *Evening Post* called us a yellow dog. Our attitude toward the *Evening Post* remains that of any dog toward any post."

The Reconstruction Finance Corporation: Niagara Falls in a diaper.

A FOOTNOTE

by VAN WYCK BROOKS

"ALAS, at thirty-five to be still preparing for something!" says Dmitri Rudin. How many times, within the last twenty-four hours, between New York and San Francisco, has that apostrophe been addressed to the American air! It is one of the tragedies of our literature that so many of our writers begin too late, when their mental bones, so to speak, are set in impossible patterns and they cannot find their true orientation. Observe what Flaubert writes, at the age of thirteen: "I see with indignation that the censorship of the stage is to be established again, and the liberty of the press abolished. . . . It is of his conscience that the man of letters is now being robbed, of his artist's conscience." You will hardly find an American writer under thirty as conscious of himself as this shows Flaubert to have been at the age of Huckleberry Finn. Here again everything depends upon our developing a school—a nursery, if you will.

SOLILOQUY BEFORE PRINTING

by BRANCH CABELL

THROUGH what mania friend, need you deliver to the world your uneventful doings, your pointless whims, and your tiny thoughts, of how slight marrow and how slender ambitiousness? Moreover, you speak without enough reticence your actual thinking, and have not garnished it with grave magnanimities.

That is not well. It is meet that in a world ruled by the dull-minded a writer should be dull decorously, and so win for himself respectful applause. It is wise that a writer should concern himself with altruism and with great modern trends of thought and with the future of humanity and with yet other ponderable matters. Let him bear in mind that his views upon communism, when once they have been made judiciously incomprehensible, can be inserted with marked advantage almost anywhere. Nor will prophesying, provided only that it involve not less than four nations in a destruction sufficiently gory, at any time be found amiss. Let him remark, too, that we live nowadays in a changing world: it is an abstruse reflection which the young have received favorably since the prime of Heraclitus.

Let the wise writer speak, in brief, with an assured conviction, as to that which has weightiness, hiding his large ignorance of his own import with large words, and instructing his hearers high-mindedly in all departments of the immense. Let him don dignity, and whinny with due solemnness, whensoever he prints. A very many will hearken to his *ducdame*: the publishers of that writer will call him blessed.

But you, friend, fare alone, perceiving too curiously the folly of your fellows and of your own doings. You forget that you also might be a judge and a prophet in your own estimation, and so be uplifted hugeously, did you not abstain from this one foolishness only. You should accredit yourself with more profound thoughts: if they be nonsense, how few will detect it! Nor will many persons heed this detection, in a world for the most part populated, and in its every part controlled, by the dull-minded.

I counsel you to desist from speaking truthfully about those little matters which continue in your daily thoughts to amuse you, and which keep mirthful your quiet living. When the dull-minded pester you with irrational antics you do well to smile at their folly. Yet, ah, infatuate! when you summon any other persons to smile with you, then has your doing a more doubtful reward. The dull are many in numbers: they do not smile at the deeds of one another: him that smiles at any time-hallowed dullness they esteem as a frivolous fellow, as a piddler with vain notions, and as a witless trifler; for all dullness is found acceptable in the eyes of the dull.

But you fare alone, compromising with the dull-minded unvaliantly in your utterances, indeed, yet offending them through your gestures unprofitably. You shrug too often, without any frank or well-thought-of reason. You avoid the immense a little timorously. Into the drift of new days you forbear to pry after dreams as large and ardent as those which swayed your far-away youth-time. Then you had grief, love, and laughter: now you are merely smug, and a life neither tragic nor blissful you think a desirable traffic. All that is done, you protest, seems well done with; your playthings content you; all that impends must be met, God willing, without any whining. So much alone you have gained from the half of a century's schooling—platitudes flavored with gratitude. Such is life's stinted tuition's end, in so far as you fathom it. That, and that only, you tell us.

ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS SERIES
No. 6

J. D. Beresford, in *The Aryan Path*:

"I feel that the sooner the Darwinian misconception of man's origin is finally rejected on all hands, the sooner will what is still quite a large number of thinking men and women be released from a restricting and injurious habit of thought."

IN BEHALF OF BOORS

by THOMAS CRAVEN

I ASK the American artist to give thought to the following historical facts. In the modern world, that is to say, from the time of the earliest biographical records, the monuments of plastic art have been produced, for the most part, by boors, by men devoid of refinement, accepted culture and social graces. The great Italian masters, Giotto, Masaccio, Donatello, Uccello, Signorelli, Mantegna, Michael Angelo, Tintoretto—the list is endless—were the sons of barbers, poulterers and peasants, and retained the healthy animalism of the underbred orders of society. The exception was Leonardo da Vinci, the first aristocrat in art, the first to wear the beret and the insignia of the æsthete. Leonardo, an illegitimate, was only half-peasant. All the Dutchmen, including Rembrandt, were low tipplers and unashamed roisterers; Breughel, the Fleming, was a boor, and Rubens was born of bourgeois stock. The Englishmen, Hogarth, Blake and Turner, came from the ruck and were held in contempt by the cultural snobs and partisans of high art. The worthy Frenchmen, leaving aside the neurotic Delacroix, from Watteau and Chardin to Daumier, Renoir, Rodin and Cézanne, were as plain as chestnut vendors and used their boorishness as a defense against the most poisonous of all cultures. And America's most original painter, Albert Ryder, shunned the élite, living squalidly in one room.

These men, I insist, were not accidents of destiny. With ninety per cent of the plastic art of the world composed by men of the lowest origins, it will repay the American artist to look into the nature of his medium. Painting, of all the arts, is the most earthy and, in the better sense of the term, the most sensual. Its very pigments have their sensual properties; its material is to be found in the direct apprehension of the forms and colors, the shapes, splendors and excitements of the physical world. To practise it with any degree of success demands the straightforward participation, the joyous sharing, in the strong uncontaminated impulses of humanity. It demands direct experiences, without the intervention of affected cultures, literature or false refinement.

For these reasons, the greatest manifestation of painting in the Western World appeared in Italy, in which sun-warmed land the painter lived close to physical realities among people accustomed to the natural functioning of their energies and the full development of their emotional life. The Italian artist was not asked to be archæologist or expositor of æsthetic theories. If it was required of him to paint a madonna, he did not dig into history or literature for his material, or paint an empty symbol; he painted a woman with whose physical and emotional life he was intimately acquainted, and in her arms placed a bambino of unmistakable human bulk. As we travel from the countries bordering the Mediterranean, we find the plastic arts decreasing in fertility, and when we come to Sweden, Russia and America, we find only bleak substitutes for sick emotions and starved desires.

Because painting is a gross and earthy business, women seem to be incapable of approaching it in the true creative spirit. I do not deny, of course, that in modern times we have had shoals of women painters, but their work at best is millinery, or a showy excuse for vanity. The only women artists of any value are those of primitive peoples—the tribal squaws who, living in dirt and performing all the menial and manual labors usually assumed by the men, found time to decorate pots and weave patterns which are the despair of highly cultured Modernists.

The American painter is born into an exceptionally favorable environment. He has no cultural tradition to stereotype his mental habits; and his country has no interest whatever in preserving anything for art's sake. He is in position to enter the sharp and exciting realities of life in as free and vigorous a spirit as the peasant Goya, or the contemporary Mexicans. He is born a boor—but he is ashamed of his boorishness. The moment he lifts a brush he strives to be some one else; to penetrate his civilization indirectly—through French patterns and European refinements. He forgets that the French have refined painting until nothing is left of it except abstract structure and the academic tinkering with processes. He forgets that the man whom he admires most, old Cézanne, was the most earthy and uncultivated of artists, the only one of the modern lot who had faith in peasant simplicities and the nobility of plain things.

He believes that only in Paris can he acquire the refinement necessary to good painting, and to Paris he goes. He is soon tarred by the Bohemian brush and, however earnest and talented, loses his identity. With the best of intentions, with appalling fixity of purpose, he resigns himself to the life-long occupation of manufacturing pictures that have no reason for existence, and no connection with anything save the sources from which they are plundered. Living in the vitiating atmosphere of art, breathing and talking art from morning till night to the exclusion of healthy experiences, looking at French art for years, he cannot look reality in the face, cannot undergo experiences arresting enough to jolt him out of his routine habits into original expression.

He loses his masculinity. The tendency of the Parisian system is to disestablish sexual characteristics, to merge the two sexes in an androgynous third containing all that is offensive in both. If you doubt the growing effeminacy of the artist, you have only to examine the performances of the modern Ecole de Paris, an emasculated school of fashions and ambiguous patterns. He returns to America afflicted with æsthetic neuralgia, doomed and

(*Continued on Page 4, Col. 2*)

LOWDOWN

by CHARLES ANGOFF

LITERARY criticism in America that is at all worthy of notice or that has any appreciable influence on sales is confined to New York. The reputation still enjoyed by the literary pages of the Boston *Evening Transcript*, presided over by Edwin Francis Edgett, has had no basis in fact for twenty-five years. They are dull and obtuse, sicklied o'er with the aroma of the remnants of the genuine Boston intellectuals of fifty years ago. As for Chicago, the bustling Fanny Butcher is the boss there. On the Pacific Coast there is not even that much. The same is true of the South, which, despite all the noise coming therefrom about its Newness, is very nearly the same as it was when William Tecumseh Sherman visited it in 1864.

But if New York is the sole fountain of American criticism in 1933, it is a very muddy fountain. Learning, discernment and courage are seldom to be found in it, but only a great deal of stupidity and "discretion," which is another word for cowardice. A rapid survey of the past seven or eight years is illuminating. The period begins with Will Durant's "The Story of Philosophy," a book which contains very little history and no philosophy, but runs over with fluff composed in the best style of Kathleen Norris. It is a vile piece of literary hamburger steak. The enormous success which it enjoyed was probably due wholly to the troupe of New York reviewers. Their comments now sound almost incredible. Harry Hansen, who had just been imported from Chicago to practise criticism on the old *World*, was beside himself with joy. He said: "I had no idea philosophy could be so readable. Will Durant is sparkling. He writes as brilliantly as Sainte Beuve does in his portraits." Henry Hazlitt, at the time on the *Sun* and now on the *Nation*, himself the author of a book on "Thinking as a Science," and who also should have known better, went Metaphysician Hansen one better. He said: "Where Addison failed, Durant has succeeded. He has humanized philosophy. He has made it live and dance and sing." The late Stuart P. Sherman and John Macy felt likewise, and so did a great many other critics.

One year later, in 1927, there appeared the Vision of Thornton Wilder, and once again there was a flood of critical cheese. To discriminating people Wilder's anemic writing and hollow thinking were as obvious then as they are now to nearly everybody, but the literary mentors of New York fell for his fraud almost without exception. So great was the praise that greeted "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" that the moguls of the Pulitzer Prize Committee were figuratively blackjacked into crowning him. The good and great Dr. Henry Seidel Canby let the world know that he had "read no other book this Fall that has given me more sheer pleasure in the reading. Its success among the discriminating should be great." Burton Rascoe gave full vent to all his celebrated enthusiasm: "Thornton Wilder will in time be accounted one of the treasures of our literature. At the age of thirty he has achieved the astonishing feat of writing a classic. There is no newcomer on the horizon whose future I would bet on with so much enthusiasm. He is almost alone in his eminence." Perhaps Mr. Rascoe can tell us where Mr. Wilder is now.

The case of the late Gamaliel Bradford presents one of the most disgraceful chapters in contemporary literary criticism in America. He was called the founder of "psychography" and "the dean of American biography." He was considered better than Strachey. The truth about him was, of course, obvious to any moderately intelligent person right along. His talents were of the slightest. Of the one hundred odd people he "psychographed" during his life, he had nothing whatever to say that was fresh. He had an instinct for picking out the most superficial aspects of his characters, for missing the essentials, and for musunderstanding their books, if they wrote any. He was solidified obtuseness. But most of the New York critics mistook his high-school mentality for art and understanding. In 1929, when "As God Made Them" appeared, they fell all over themselves—danced in the streets, as the cute phrase goes—in showering him with sweet greases. Charles Willis Thompson, in the *Times*, said: "He always writes with penetration, grace, and art, and is forever interesting." Herschel Brickell, who generally "covers" Spain for whatever review editor gives him the chance, but who occasionally favors his public with his mature views about other phases of human life, said of the book: "These are finely limned portraits, and often quite as illuminating as full-length biographies."

Again, we engaged the case of John Erskine, whose cheap "Helen of Troy" was found to be full of mellow wisdom. There was the case of William Bolitho, whose precocious dumbness so electrified New York for a while that talk about him displaced the gabble about Humanism. His profound nonsense, clapclapped by his colleagues on the old *World*, was taken for profound wisdom. He could barely write a sensible line of English, but that didn't stump Walter Lippmann, who understands everything, and who said of him that "he writes like a man from Mars." Of the preposterous accolade of praise that greeted Abbé Dimnet's sermon to the Holy Name Societies of the world, "The Art of Thinking," we all know, for the economiums of it were reprinted in full only the other day when his "What We Live By" was published. He is still considered by some of the reviewers as a combination of Aristotle and Montaigne, but the reading public refuses to be convinced this time.

Other such fourth-raters have been encouraged to do a thriving business in America, many of them

(*Continued on Page 4, Col. 1*)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LOWDOWN

(*Continued from Page 3, Col. 5*)

home talent. I mention Allan Nevins, the glorified hack, who, in the spare time he finds from praising the later and inferior books of James Truslow Adams, turns out fat histories and biographies, which are full of "research" but weak in understanding. His recent life of Grover Cleveland has been well received in New York. It is a big book, but it cries for a critical mind to rewrite it. Mr. Nevins praises Cleveland's courage, when what he should say is indiscriminate thick-headedness. Cleveland was against the high tariff, but he was also against the Pullman strikers, to harass whom he plundered the Federal Constitution, and through his clumsiness in the Venezuela affair he came near to bringing on a war with England.

But why go on? Getting up in the morning in New York these week-days, for a reading person, is a depressing business. The day ahead looks so hopeless. What is there for an intelligent man to read? And on Sunday we have only the *Times Book Review* and the *Herald Tribune Books*. The first is so dull and unintelligent that only book-sellers pay any attention to it. The second is better, but one is never sure about the relationship of author and critic, and there is always Isabel Paterson's three-dot chit-chat to hurdle, not to mention Will Cuppy's soliloquies about "psychological thrillers." Dr. Canby's *Saturday Review* is simply the *Times Book Review* printed on yellowish white paper. It glories in the regular contributions of that celebrated thinker, Christopher Morley.

The literary miasma of New York does something to able men. Take, for example, James Truslow Adams. His histories of New England were excellent. He was then given the Pulitzer Prize and taken in hand by the Manhattan critics—and he was done. Soon he was writing fluff for that country sheet, the *Sunday Times Magazine Section*. Then came "The Epic of America," a hack job, full of hasty writing and shoddy thinking. And finally came "The March of Democracy," which is "The Epic of America" illustrated and stretched out to two volumes. Only the other day he went the whole hog by contributing a long article to the *Saturday Review of Literature* glorifying Walter Lippmann as a mind "of strongly knit intellectual texture, . . . the most important leader of American public opinion today and a genuinely great one." There's no stopping such people once they begin to slide. Consider what happened to John Dewey, the premier American philosopher by acclamation. He began life as a superannuated Norman Thomas and has remained so ever since, but once he had a semblance of discrimination. He once knew that Dr. Frank Crane differed in some way from Charles S. S. Peirce. Now he is hot for Will Durant and Abbé Dimnet. He called the latter's trashy "The Art of Thinking" "a gentle and witty book," and he admonished his readers to "keep it on a bedside table and read it to compose your mind at night and to arouse it in the morning."

There are, of course, a few certain men of some taste and integrity among the New York reviewers. Their identity is obvious. But the rest are merely silly word mongers. The publishers seem to love them, for they are always giving off lines and paragraphs that look good on jackets or in advertisements. But to well-read and sagacious readers they are a despair. That some of the good new books manage to live despite their obtuseness is one of the proofs of the existence of God that the Christian Fathers missed.

FREUDIANISM BEFORE FREUD

(*Continued from Page 1, Col. 2*)

channels. Goet fully understood the importance of this. On January 18, 1825, Eckermann reported that when Rebhein had compared the poetical talents of ladies to an intellectual sex-instinct, Goethe replied, "Usually these beings have not been fortunate in love, and so they now seek compensation elsewhere." But the most striking of all Goethe's anticipations of Freud occurs in the second part of Faust, Act I, where the mother-goddesses are worshipped. Faust, approaching them, would fain burrow deeply in their "dwelling" but finds the road thither impossible. What is this but the Œdipus complex, unconsciously shaping the dreams of the ego, but barred from enactment and from recognition by the moral censor in the brain?

Besides Goethe, I have found two other pre-Freudians worth quoting. Henri Beyle (1783-1842) in his autobiographical "Vie de Henri Brulard," wrote:

> I was in love with my mother, a charming woman. I hasten to add that I lost her at the age of seven. But my love for her, at six, was exactly the same in character as my love for Alberta many years later. . . . I wanted to cover my mother with kisses, and that she should have no clothes. . . . I abhorred my father for interrupting our kisses, which I especially loved to give her on the breast.

Surely the most devoted follower of the psychoanalysts could not have described more clearly a typical Œdipus complex. The reverse side of the same complex is defined by that proper and moral Victorian novelist, Thackeray. In "Pendennis" he declared that "in the anxiety with which brooding women watch over their sons' affections I have no doubt there is a sexual jealousy on the mother's part and a secret pang."

The Editors opine that one move which might be made by the incoming administration, and one which would tend to restore confidence, bring back prosperity and generally refortify the faith of the average American in his institutions, his leaders and the capitalistic system in toto, would be for the Reconstructi s Finance Corporation to lend Samuel Insull an even two billion dollars.

THE DEPRESSION AND THE VIRTUE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

by ALBERT CAHN, JR.

FAR-REACHING as have been the effects of the depression in the blasting of the credos of the Middle West, more far reaching have been the changes of *mores* effected by it. With the decline of Babbittry and its accompanying idealism, pragmatism in the matter of amusements came into full vogue, with the result that the sex life of the Mid-West, long a gold mine for the psychoanalysts of the cow towns and material for the Freudian dramatists, is rapidly approaching the natural simplicity of the civilized man, *i.e.*, the peasant of the thirteenth century.

The cause of all this is the increased leisure imposed by business conditions upon the male of the species, and the increased boredom and sense of frustration that the straightened circumstances have imposed upon the female. Back in the Coolidge era, the average young man (and in the Mid-West, the average is the tremendous majority) was too interested in becoming ultimately the President of the United States Steel Corporation, or if that wasn't possible, then the President of the United States, or at least the best little shrub on the side of the hill, to be much interested in sex. If he partook at all, he usually purchased it from some *nymphe du trottoir* much in the manner that he wolfed a hamburger in a drugstore before rushing back to work.

The young lady of that time either fell in as the complement of that picture or, if she happened to be educated in Europe and felt any deeper urges, usually bowed to the force of circumstances, sighed, and released her libido by reading "Lady Chatterley's Lover" and going to see matinée performances of "Desire Under the Elms." The less emotional females spent their time wholesomely and—as far as our research goes—contentedly in attending picture shows and the weekly dances at the country club.

The depression changed all this. In the first place, the men became disillusioned. Under the overwhelming pressure of the economic breakdown, they not only saw the immense odds against anyone of them personally becoming the President of the United States, but they began to doubt whether or not they wanted to be the President of the United States. In this frame of mind they were forced to find something with which to occupy themselves. At the same time, anything expensive was automatically ruled out. Even the most simple amusements of the Coolidge era were now a strain on the Mid-Western budgets.

The solution was obvious. The disillusioned young men, weary of business and pep and hustling, and needing a new interest in life, took to their long-neglected girl friends with an enthusiasm that was refreshing. And in the absence of funds to provide entertainment, they insisted on that form of universal relaxation with which a kind Providence has blessed humanity, so that even a couple on a desert isle can find something to do. The girls, moreover, took to it with an enthusiasm no less refreshing than the men's

As a consequence, the cow towns are becoming much more pleasant places in which to live. The rare, cynical young men who used to drift around them, finding only an occasional bright spot in the form of some business widow who was glad to furnish the whiskey if they would furnish the rest—sources of amusement, incidentally, that are being dried up by the same forces that are making them unnecessary—these young men are now happy with the usual run. All they do is thank God before getting into bed each night for an unplanned economic system, and pray that technocracy never seriously takes up parthenogenesis.

SERVANTS OF GOD
No. 6

Special to the New York Times:

LONG BEACH, L. I., N. Y.—The Rev. Felix G. Robinson, 34, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church-by-the-Sea, and Charles W. Ackerman, 68, vice-president of the church board of trustees, were booked at the police station here this morning on charges of assault, following a row in the edifice. A telephone call was received at the station house from an excited woman member of the congregation shortly after 10 A.M., about a half hour before the pastor was to open the Sunday service. He had chosen for his sermon the subject, "What the Church Ought to Be."

IN BEHALF OF BOORS

(*Continued from Page 3, Col. 4*)

ruined—neither fish, fowl, nor frog. He is no longer a boor; he is a bore—without mind or manners. He consoles himself with cries of "unappreciated genius," or "hostile, commercialized America"—introspective pulings wrung from his wretched ego. He retires with his Bohemian dress and his æsthetic fripperies to the art colonies of Provincetown, Woodstock or Santa Fé. The country—the interior of America—would indeed be his salvation, if he could live the healthy uninhibited life of the pig and thus recover his wits. But he cannot participate in anything except his own shows and masquerades.

Boorishness alone will not make an artist: the boor must have a mind. The ideal painter is Rembrandt—the boor with brains. There are few painters in America with anything that can be called a mind; and the favored handful are not looking abroad for salvation. They are turning to the American environment with something of the honesty and intensity of Faulkner, and the sensual relish of Hemingway. They are endeavoring to put their experiences together in the earthy fashion characteristic of all painting when it serves a useful purpose.

THE AMERICAN INQUISITION

by JOHN ADAM SMITH

INTELLIGENCE is not a monopoly of the foreigner in any country, but in America it has a habit of speaking with a foreign accent. It should be careful. A little accent is a dangerous thing. A little is more dangerous than a lot, because it is more likely to betray intelligence, and thereby hangs this sorry tale.

He is silent in several languages and studiously dumb in English, though he speaks it fluently. If the depression continues he may become silent in several more. Two languages are better than one for concealing one's thoughts. Nothing translated is still nothing, but translation has a way of making its nothingness more apparent. However, these languages do not conceal the fact that one thinks, and in his case seven languages have increased his troubles sevenfold. They have multiplied the suspicion that he harbors all manner of subversive thoughts, though thus far he has been indicted only on the charge of thinking.

He came to this country as a little boy and, to all appearances in periods mistaken for prosperity, he grew up to be a good American. That is, he saluted the flag; took off his hat when he heard the national anthem; paid his taxes when he could pay them; obeyed every reasonable law that he could remember; and signed a marriage license before signing the hotel register.

It was not his life's ambition to become a good American, but he hoped to be mistaken, for one and thereby feel perfectly free to pursue his studies. On attaining full legal status as a naturalized American citizen he took the Declaration of Independence so seriously as to believe that, though born abroad, he was one of the "created equal" and endowed with the rights to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Pursuing happiness in the realm of thought, he was doubly disappointed: he did not find it and the pursuit brought him under suspicion.

Came the depression and with it the great American inquisition, an inquisition as merciless as that driving the Jews out of Spain, and differing from it only in that it was more strictly economic and less intentionally sadistic. Doubtless there is some sadistic delight in the sufferings of the victims of the American Torquemadas, as there were economic as well as religious reasons for their infamous predecessors, but never before was there such a ban on thinking as thinking. So long as one went to the Church, paid the tolls of piety and professed to believe in all the doctrines of the Christian combine, the Spanish inquisition was not greatly concerned with what one thought. It was what one said that mattered. One had to be overheard saying, or accused of saying something contrary to the faith, to be seriously in danger. Even then expressed and emphatic recantation was often sufficient to evade the horrors of the torture chamber.

In modern America it is more than one's liberty is worth to be suspected of thinking unorthodox thoughts on economic questions, and failure to register and vote for the Republican or the Democratic party is deemed to be proof of the crime. Not to be a Republican or a Democrat is presumptive evidence that one is a Communist, as not to be Protestant or a Roman Catholic is taken to mean that one is an atheist. If one thinks outside the standard faiths one must be guilty of denying the existence of God, and if one is not a registered Republican or Democrat or Prohibitionist one must be thinking thoughts of violence to the Constitution and plotting to overthrow the capitalist system of production for profit, with millions and millions of unemployed when there is no profit to be made by employing them.

If the thinker happens to be an alien or a naturalized citizen the hounds of the inquisition are hot on his trail. And the economic heresy hunt is not the harmless sport of snooping for liquor law violators. Public opinion is with the bootlegger and the speakeasy, but woe to the thoughtlegger in whose speakeasy there is talk of some other economic system.

II.

It so happens that our hero, referred to with pronominal precaution, is not inclined to serious thinking on industrial and political issues. At least he never betrays such inclination. His bias is more literary and philosophic. They are his safety first, but they have not saved him. He is manifestly an intellectual and, worse, he has been overheard talking with other men in other languages than that in which the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are written.

The one handicap he has never been able to overcome is a slight accent in his otherwise perfect English. Again and again that accent has been caught by someone kind enough to notify the local officials of the inquisition, and each time he has been subjected to another investigation. Give the officials their due—they have grown tired of putting him on the spot, questioning and questioning him at his home and where he works. They have never been able to find anything incriminating in his papers, and for the simple reason that nothing of the kind is to be found.

He keeps everything in his head and not until telepathy supersedes the dictaphone will he be in danger, if even then. It is his compensation that life in America can be lived outside it, if one lives in the world of permitted books. He reads and smiles, smiles and reads, but says nothing, unless it be such confidences as:

"I am a citizen of America. I was not prepared for that citizenship by birth, but I am by education. Before the war which, like most other students, I saw coming, I studied both history and economics. The more I studied history the less inclined I was to politico-economic speculation, because I foresaw the coming of the great American inquisition with its woe to all of foreign origin. The foreigner is always wrong; always held to blame for what is wrong, and if we are not prepared to make war upon him abroad we can do so at home. He is our 'out.'

"It was perfectly clear to me that a real inquisition would follow in the wake of the unreal prosperity, and that when the depression, the big depression, came, everybody, citizens as well as aliens and the naturalized, who dared to think logically would be accused of radicalism. The thinking citizens would be liable to imprisonment, as Debs was imprisoned, and the thinking aliens would be deported. I could hear them saying, 'He thinks about such things, therefore he must be a Communist, a Red.' Most clearly of all could I see the coming of a time when every alien would be suspected of irregular ideas; when a foreign accent would be safe only if heard shouting the platitudes of the two regular political parties. I like America because I have lived here so long and made so many good friends, but I am prepared to leave it if, when they force me out because they do not know what I think, they will let me choose the country to which I am to be deported. I have had enough of so-called civilization and would like to select a place where there are no public schools educating people to be technically useful and obey their masters, but otherwise ignorant, intolerant and patriotic.

"If some native-born American wants my job he can have it and do the kicking at its miserable pay. Let him make the sacrifice of working for far less than he earns or is worth. America owes me the difference between what I have earned and what I have received, and if it deports me it will be repudiating the debt. The debt it owes its native-born workers never will be paid. But perhaps this is getting dangerously near to thinking things forbidden under the inquisition."

The Editors gather that any statement of a point of view with which one does not agree is "propaganda".

THE SOUTHWESTERN CULTURE MOVEMENT

by LAWRENCE JAMES WATHEN, JR.

THE regional culture movement has swept the nation by storm and there is hardly a section of the country that is not represented by some form of indigenous art. Of all the militant regional cultures, the most rampant and vociferous is the Southwestern Culture Movement, which has for its high priests Witter Bynner, Stanley Vestal, Mary Austin, J. Frank Dobie, John H. McGinnis and Henry Smith. Dr. McGinnis and Mr. Smith are on the faculty of Southern Methodist University and edit *The Southwest Review*, which is issued at irregular intervals and which is the Bible of the movement. The Southwestern Culture Movement has been slowly coming to the fore for the past ten years and it reached its apotheosis with the acceptance by the Literary Guild of J. Frank Dobie's "Coronado's Children" (a rehashed and amplified book of legends of the Southwest which Dobie had edited for the Texas Folklore Society a decade previously). Much ado was made of the fact that this was the first book ever accepted by a national book club from a publisher west of the Mississippi.

The artistic capital of the Southwestern Culture Movement is Dallas and the movement is, in the main, confined to Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. The movement is not without honor in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. The leaders of the movement and their satellites are intolerant of any criticism and wildly talk of the similarity of the Grecian and Southwestern landscape and climate, and none too veiledly of a possible Southwestern Age of Pericles.

A severe handicap is presented at the outset, for the Southwestern Culture Movement is a conscious program, and this tends to put the creative artist on the *qui vive*, with one ear to the ground and the other to his genius. That Southwestern Culture is the rage among our average people may be easily seen in the indigenous architecture of hamburger stands (designed to represent a chuck wagon) and by a turn of a radio dial to almost any broadcast, which will shake the rafters with the moans and grunts of an adenoidal tenor singing a popular cowboy ballad to the sonorous accompaniment of a jew's harp and harmonica. Rotund housewives enjoy vicarious amours while reciting their own love lyrics to rapt audiences of club women. Neurotic co-eds and and pale college youths form poetry societies to write about Love and Death. Greengrocers and superannuated dowagers attempt to rival Dante and Sappho. The pompous Poetry Society of Texas sponsors contests and holds poetry evenings. Correspondence course graduates create short stories and novels with their locales always a ranch, a place known to them through Mr. Hoot Gibson's art cinemas and Western Story magazines.

Too often are Southwestern works of literature only competently constructed novels or short stories with a bit of Southwestern local color, atmosphere and dialect thrown in for seasoning. Obviously, these superficial trappings cannot make a truly Southwestern piece of art any more than a dash of sage in bean soup will make *potage à la reine*. Other Southwestern literary works are composed merely of local anecdotes, *genre* characters, or faintly picturesque details, which are, however admirable as examples of an embryonic folklore, essentially fragmentary and disjointed. Most Southwestern literature leaves the reader with the suspicion that the authors know as little about cowboy lore, negro dialect and details of plantation life as they do of Franconian folksongs or the patois of the Abruzzi.

Not until a novel or a short story is born of the Southwest, and not of a conscious cult or style, will a fine and representative piece of work emerge. Texas, for example, is too young to have many traditions and much culture. A glance at the population figures of Texas before 1820 should convince even the most ardent regional culturist that the handful of colonists in Spanish Texas was too small to have a culture. Most of the colonists were lucky if they didn't starve to death or weren't scalped. Before 1820, in the preceding three hundred years about which Texas historians make so many claims, the only monuments which now remain are the San Antonio Missions, the work of Spanish Franciscans and their Indian helpers. There is no music, no art and no literature, except a paltry few legends collected by Miss Adina de Zavala of San Antonio.

In poetry the Southwest has produced much kitchen verse of high order, extolling the beauties of the sunlight flashing on green saucepans, etc. Eighth carbon copies of Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Weltschmerz* appear by the thousand. Prairie lyrics and cowboy ballads are written by East Texas piney woods "poetesses," who know as little of West Texas as they do of the Spreewald. It must be admitted, however, that Lexie Dean Robertson, no matter what her rank as a poet, has at least written on an original and interesting subject, the oil fields. The reader feels that Mrs. Robertson knows and loves what she is writing about.

In drama, the Southwestern playwright tacks cowboy chaps or slaves and mint juleps on Scribe plots. The celebrated Dallas Little Theatre, queen of amateur dramatics in the Southwest, has seen fit to produce only one original full-length play (and that by a member of its Play Reading Committee) in its decade of existence. The Little Theatre has a mission to fulfill and that mission should go beyond providing a setting for a fashionable first-night audience, driving housewives to snatch at Katharine Cornell's crown, and the establishment of a virtually commercial theatre wherein everyone save the actors is paid.

Southwestern music is usually a ragout of cowboy songs, negro spirituals and a generous flavoring of Messrs. Gershwin, Tschaikowsky, Wagner, Puccini, Dvórák and Borodin. With exceptions ("Home on the Range," arranged by Oscar J. Fox, or David W. Guion, being a notable one), there is little of true musical worth in the cowboy songs. They appear on concert programs of famed singers solely on their merits as novelties and as a gesture to Southwestern concert audiences. Negro spirituals never flourished in Texas as they did in Virginia and the Carolinas. Texas was "Old South" for such a short time and the comparatively few slaves in Texas made not even a sizeable contribution to this true and poignant art form.

It is in the art of painting that the Southwest has achieved more of a success, and that success is due, perhaps, to the fact that the Southwestern artist has painted what was in front of him, without a thought of portraying the Southwestern scene. This unconscious choice of subject matter has resulted in the popularity of blue bonnet pictures, West Texas landscapes, with cattle and fields of nigger toe, and Indian blanket meadows which adorn Tudor living rooms and Louis Seize drawing rooms. While much of this work is hopelessly stereotyped, there have been some good canvases that are free from influences of Expressionism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, which are blighting much of our native art. David R. Williams of Dallas, furthermore, is doing interesting work in the evolution of a typical Texas style of architecture. In this field there are some few remains and traditions of the past.

In time, a culture, a general culture embracing all the arts, may conceivably come out of the Southwest. The present mushroom growth, forced, unnatural and self-conscious, is hardly likely to produce a single work of art. If a reputable work of art were to emanate from the Southwest today, it would be the work of an innate genius unaided by an incessant agitation for cow punchers' tall tales, Negro spirituals, ante-bellum romances, and the poetry of canning time.

DOUBLE STANDARD NO. 2

Now that women have agitated successfully for the single standard in sex, it remains for them to agitate with equal intelligence for the single standard in looks. Women still labor under the handicap of the tradition that, while they must be good-looking, the looks of a man mean little and do not much count. The tradition has imposed a tremendous amount of pain and effort upon them, and in most cases no little disappointment and woe. Yet at bottom it is as ridiculous as the double standard of sex. There is no intelligible reason why looks should not be demanded of a man as well as of a woman. If there is one, we should like to hear it. The contrary doctrine has been advanced by men so ugly that they frighten women and children, simply by way of substantiating their own unhappy position and giving them a chance with the girls.

Das Kapital: What the unfortunate rich are now living on.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED